

Dr. Enrique García-Barros Saura. In Memoriam

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<https://zoobank.org/83CB262B-18EF-4DAA-9874-329F7A4E9FE4>

Received 24 February 2026; accepted 28 February 2026; published: 25 March 2026

Subject Editor: Carlos Lopez-Vaamonde.



On January 16th, our dear colleague and distinguished entomologist Enrique García-Barros Saura passed away at the age of 66. All of us who knew him, and especially those of us who cultivated his friendship, hold an indelible memory of his worth, his scientific and intellectual excellence, and above all, his humanity. We never wished to write this obituary, the words of which we still struggle to comprehend and accept, and we dare to publish it only as a tribute to his memory and to his person.

Enrique was born in Madrid on June 11th, 1959, into a middle-class family. His father, Dr. Enrique García-Barros Bernabéu, was a psychiatrist; his mother, María Pilar Saura Atarés, was the sister of the artists Antonio (a painter) and Carlos (a filmmaker) Saura. The eldest of three siblings, he was a very curious, observant, and introverted child who loved animals. Enrique recounted how,

as a child, he had won a photography contest with a portrait of his tortoise, Cleopatra, and that he always had pets: hamsters, lizards, fishes... He often heard the monkeys, bears, and other animals at the zoo in the Retiro, a park in the centre of Madrid, that was right across the street from his childhood home. At the age of four, he started kindergarten (as it was called then) at the “Santa María del Pilar” school in the Retiro neighbourhood, also very close to his home, and he finished his secondary education and university access exams there.

In October 1976 and until December 1981, he studied for a Biology Degree at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM). Some of Enrique’s earliest memories are fondly recalled by one of the signatories of this note (JLV), who was his Zoology professor. Perhaps the oldest of these memories refers to the collection of the 100 animals that, at that time, students were required to deliver. Most of the specimens were of common insects collected around the buildings that housed the laboratories on the campus at Cantoblanco; there were also shells of molluscs found on the beaches (and perhaps in amongst the paella!), earthworms preserved in alcohol, lizards killed at the roadside, etc. García-Barros as a student included among his specimens a paper butterfly that he had painted himself (a *Thymelicus*, to be precise) which faithfully imitated a real specimen, and, of course, although it was perfectly pinned and labelled, it was discovered. As an excuse, and after the resultant telling off, Enrique argued that there was no reason to kill the butterfly, and that a model was more than enough. It must have been the first lesson that he gave us.

On June 16th, 1982, he defended his master thesis, entitled “The Butterflies of La Alcarria,” which was awarded the highest distinction. Shortly afterwards, he began his PhD thesis under the guidance of Drs. Joaquín Templado and José Luis Viejo. Given the experience gained from his undergraduate thesis, and at Dr. Templado’s suggestion, Enrique undertook a comparative biological study of four butterfly species, scarcely known at that time. That thesis, entitled “Comparative Biological Study of *Hipparchia semele*, *H. statilinus*, *H. alcyone*, and *Pseudotergumia fidia* (Lep. Satyridae),” was defended at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid on July 1, 1987, and unanimously awarded the highest distinction, “*cum laude*.” It was the first entomology thesis completed entirely within the UAM’s Department of Biology.

In October 1984, he obtained a position as an assistant teacher in the Department of Biology at the UAM’s Faculty of Sciences. Within this category, he completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Zoologiska Institutionen, Stockholm University, from March 1990, to April 1991, under the supervision of Professor Christer Wiklund, one of the leading figures in the study of Lepidoptera ecology in Europe. His time in Sweden provided a significant boost to his scientific career, as he began collaborating with prominent European entomologists, particularly with his mentor in Stockholm, Dr. Wiklund. Taken together, the work of García-Barros and Wiklund (1992–1997) introduced a comparative and functional approach to European lepidopterology, connecting developmental physiology, ecology, and evolution, and made up a direct step towards Enrique García-Barros’s subsequent studies on allometry, body size, and macroecological patterns, which would eventually be integrated into spatial and cartographic analyses of biodiversity.

In July 1993, he gained the position of Professor of Zoology in the Department of Biology at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and began to take on greater teaching responsibilities. In the subsequent years, he taught theoretical and practical courses in the Biology Degree program, particularly the subject of Zoology in the initial years of this degree. He also collaborated in teaching the Applied Entomology course in the Master’s program in Biodiversity and some other subjects. In recent years, he taught courses in the Biology degree program and the Biodiversity and Ecology

master's programs at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, including Zoology (Biology degree), Advanced Laboratory (Taxonomy Laboratory, 3rd year, Biology degree), Biodiversity of Terrestrial Organisms (Master in Biodiversity, UAM), and Biogeography (Master's degree in Ecology, UAM-UCM). He also supervised numerous undergraduate and Master's theses. A testament to his tireless dedication, open and innovative spirit, and originality was the fact that he was supervising, together with one of the signatories (JLV), an undergraduate thesis in the Environmental Sciences degree entitled "Environmental aspects of the work of Hieronymus Bosch." Furthermore, he coordinated the two published editions of the university's "Manual de Prácticas de Zoología", which compile the practical guides for this subject and is widely used by students. He is a co-author of several of these guides that included original drawings by himself.

His research focused primarily on the Order Lepidoptera, and in particular on Iberian butterflies (superfamily Papilionoidea). He had been interested in the chorology, biogeography, phylogeny, behaviour, morphology, ecology, biology, and conservation of these insects. Of Dr. García-Barros's 169 publications, it is extremely difficult to single out any one in particular, but if we had to, we would say it was his direction, co-authorship, and promotion of "Fauna iberica" volume 37, dedicated to butterflies:

Fauna iberica. Vol. 37. Lepidoptera: Papilionoidea. García-Barros, E., Munguira, M. L., Stefanescu, C. & Vives Moreno, A. (2013), 1216 pages.

This book constitutes the most comprehensive taxonomic and biogeographical synthesis on the butterflies of the Iberian Peninsula and Balearic Islands. It systematically integrates morphological diagnoses, biological, ecological, and distributional data, supported by a documentary and faunal database with records for over more than a century. From a historical perspective, it represents the culmination of the Iberian faunal tradition, while also incorporating modern criteria of chorology, conservation status, and geographic variability, making it an essential reference work for research, biological mapping, and the conservation of Papilionoidea in Spain.

Among the publications for which he was the leading author, two stand out: the "Atlas of the Butterflies of the Iberian Peninsula and Balearic Islands (Lepidoptera: Papilionoidea & Hesperioidea)," (2004), which has been widely cited and has served as the basis for dozens of collaborative works with numerous authors; and "Parsimony Analysis of Endemicity and Its Application to Animal and Plant Geographic Distributions in the Ibero-Balearic Region (Western Mediterranean)," published in the Journal of Biogeography in 2002, which is his most cited work due to its remarkable originality.

Another noteworthy work was the Atlas and Red Book of Spanish Butterflies, for which he was a member of the coordination team, along with two of this note authors (HR, MLM). Sadly, Enrique did not live to see this important contribution published, as he passed away three months after its submission.

Enrique's attendance and presentations at national and international conferences were a constant since 1982, when he attended the "V Jornadas de la Asociación española de Entomología" held in Valencia with his presentation on the "Butterfly Fauna (Papilionoidea and Hesperioidea) of the Alcarria Region." He began his participation in international conferences in 1986, attending the "5th European Congress of Lepidopterology of the Society for European Lepidopterology" (SEL) held in Hungary, with the presentation "Period of pre-oviposition and notes on the biology of the Grayling,

Hipparchia semele (L.) in Central Spain.” Subsequently, Enrique attended many more SEL conferences; his expertise, regular participation, and fluent English made him one of the most recognised European lepidopterists, and he also served on the Council of this prominent scientific society. For over 30 years, he participated in the SEL biennial congresses at numerous European venues. He presented more than 90 papers at the various congresses in which he participated. It is also worth mentioning his contribution as one of the organisers of the “X European Congress of Lepidopterology”, held in Miraflores de la Sierra (Madrid), May, 1996. In addition to attending the congresses of SEL and the “Asociación Española de Entomología” (both national and Iberian), he has presented works at other conferences of societies such as the “Sociedad Hispano-Luso-Americana de Lepidopterología” (SHILAP), the “Real Sociedad Española de Historia Natural”, the “Institute of Ecology and Systematics”, and at international congresses such as “Future of Butterflies in Europe”, the “International Congress of Entomology, Biology of Butterflies, Behavioural Ecology, Butterfly Ecology and Evolution”, and those organized by the “International Biogeography Society.” This demonstrates his interest in the biology, evolution, behaviour, biogeography, and conservation of butterflies. A comprehensive list of his publications can be found in the Appendix.

He also co-directed two doctoral theses with Miguel L. Munguira. The first, defended in 2003 by Patrícia Garcia-Pereira, focused on “Butterflies of Continental Portugal: Faunistics, Biogeography, and Conservation.” This thesis assessed the knowledge of Portugal’s lepidopterological fauna, identifying areas with the greatest species richness and diversity and proposing appropriate conservation strategies. The second, defended in 2008 by Helena Romo Benito, was entitled “Geographical Diversity of Ibero-Balearic Butterflies.” This work provided an analysis of the distribution and richness of the 226 species of butterflies in the Ibero-Balearic region. It was the first time that butterflies were used to delimit biogeographical regions based on the species they harbour. This thesis also estimates butterfly sampling effort and associated biases, evaluate the national coverage of the network of protected areas for these insects, and develop initial models of potential distribution for rare or threatened species. Enrique also co-directed, together with Ana Luz Márquez and Raimundo Real from the Universidad de Málaga (UMA), the thesis defended in 2022 by Antonio Pulido entitled “Application of fuzzy logic to the analysis of the spatial structure of diurnal butterfly populations in the Iberian Peninsula”.

As a field entomologist, his tenacity was noteworthy. To find the elusive larvae of the satyrids he studied, he would amble through clumps of grass with an enormous comb and collect the caterpillars in a metal dish. His tremendous effort to complete the butterfly data for Spanish areas lacking records was also remarkable. He took advantage of both personal and university trips to stop over in unexplored regions. The butterfly database used for the two editions of the “Atlas de Mariposas Españolas” compiles his numerous field observations, scattered throughout Spain.

With endless creativity, Enrique got surprising and often brilliant proposals and initiatives. He made excellent sketches and possessed a capacity for abstraction and synthesis far superior to most of us mere mortals, making him such a pleasure to work with. He constantly surprised us with ingenious ideas, collages, humorous posters, and those small details that always brought a smile to our faces. He was not one to delegate, but he loved helping his colleagues and family. His passion was research, without neglecting his teaching; his classes were engaging and distinctive, designed to cultivate critical thinking skills in students who questioned everything.

As a colleague, Enrique García-Barros was an exceptional person. He always exuded an optimism, tinged with skepticism and irony. His idiosyncrasies included his humming and his soft

whistling in the department corridors which were legendary, as was his intelligent humour with colleagues and students. It was a pleasure to work with him; he was always willing, attentive, a good listener, and generous. Discreet and modest, even somewhat introverted, he rarely expressed his worries, which, like anyone else, he surely had. He faced his short and fatal illness with the same tranquillity as the rest of his life.

His family, friends, colleagues, and all who knew him will miss him utterly. Rest in peace, Enrique.

Y ME DECÍS LUEGO

Se marcha Enrique,
El pasillo queda silente,
Sin el silbo, sin el canturreo,
Quizá un lejano rumor de voces inconcretas.

Luego

Se apaga la luz y todos lloran,
Pero enseguida se encienden candiles y bengalas;
Son chispas, fogonazos, flashes,
El fondo sigue siendo oscuro y silencioso
Pero hay luces fugaces
Que alegran las miradas,
Ecos lejanos,
Pero perceptibles,
Que recuerdan que no se fue del todo,
Que permanece tanto
En livianos garabatos,
Como en dibujos olvidados
Y, cómo no, en sus escritos,
Sólidos, magníficos, creativos,
De portentosa imaginación
Y geniales ocurrencias.
No, no se fue del todo,
Escuchad esos ecos,
Recordad esas vivencias
Y me decís luego.

AND TELL ME LATER

Enrique leaves,
The hallway falls silent,
Without the whistling, without the humming,
Perhaps a distant murmur of indistinct voices.

Then

The light goes out and everyone cries,
But soon candles and flares are lit;
They are sparks, flashes, bursts,
The background remains dark and silent
But there are fleeting lights
That brighten our gazes,
Distant echoes,
But perceptible,
That remind us he didn't leave completely,
That he remains both
In light scribbles,
As in forgotten drawings
And, of course, in his writings,
Solid, magnificent, creative,
Of prodigious imagination
And brilliant insights.
No, he didn't leave completely,
Listen to those echoes,
Remember those experiences
And tell me later.

Appendix 1. List of publications

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